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WINSTON, NAT
COLLECTION OF WINSTON FAMILY PAPERS
1825-1963

Processed by:

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INTRODUCTION

The collection of family papers of the Winston and Taylor families and the tapes containing folk music and reminiscences was loaned for copying by Dr. Nat Wilson, Assistant Commissioner of the Division of Psychiatric Services for Tennessee.

The materials in this collection measure .42 feet. There are no restrictions on the materials. Single photocopies of unpublished writings in the Nat Winston Collection may be made for purposes of scholarly research.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

The papers, containing approximately sixty-five items (photocopies) and three tapes for the dates 1825 to 1919, are composed of agreements, court records, estate papers, list of notes for collection, receipts, correspondence, and three tapes containing folk music, reminiscences and genealogical data about the Taylor and Winston families. The largest portion of the correspondence is addressed to A.W. Taylor and is concerned with the collection of notes, land sales, and horse sales.

The correspondents include A.W. Carter, William R. Caswell, John. R. Delaney, A. Alexander Doak, Ephraim H. Foster, James L. Greer, William K. Hunter, George H. Pepper, Nathaniel L. Taylor, Jonathan Tipton, and George West. The Taylors and Winstons of this collection were ancestors of the two Taylor governors of Tennessee, Robert Love Taylor and Alfred A. Taylor.

The three tapes contain folk music played and sung by the Gragg family, Sam Coffey, Earl Scruggs, and Dr. Nat Winston. In addition to the music the tapes contain interesting reminiscences of Sam Coffey and Nat Winston, Sr., both of whom had lived a long time in East Tennessee and were familiar with the early history of the State. Digital copies of the audio recordings are available. The following summaries of the tapes give a more detailed account of their contents.

TAPE 1

FOLKSONGS SUNG BY THE GRAGG FAMILY - August-September 1963

Dr. Nat Winston recording folksongs at the home of Harvey Gragg in North Carolina; folksongs played and sung by the Graggs and neighbors (see index); musicians introduced: Floyd Gragg, Shirley Simmons, Obie Garrett, Clayton Gragg, David Gragg, Harvey Gragg, Mrs. Harvey Gragg, Linda Gragg, and Edward Gragg; August 17, 1963.

Dr. Winston recording folksongs at Edward Gragg's home (see index); September 21, 1963.

TAPE 2

ORAL HISTORY, FOLKLORE, AND SONG OF THE SOUTHERN MOUNTAINS

Dr. Winston interviewing Sam Coffey; Coffey tells stories from the late 19th and early 20th Centuries; comments on first time he saw a balloon and a helicopter and of trying to shoot them down; tells of irregular warfare in the mountains during the Civil War; comments on coon hunting and using muzzle loading rifle; walking 24 miles a day to and from work; his first pair of shoes made by his father; comments on how "Troops Rockhouse" got its name; January 1960.

"Happy John" Coffey sings and plays folksongs (see index) on homemade harp; comments on how he makes harps; Dr. Winston comments on a visit to North Carolina and watching Frank Proffit make dulcimers; March 1, 1963.

Sam Coffey relates more mountains lore. Comments on raising flax, making soap, home remedies, making flour, sugar, etc.; tells of first stove in the area; comments on

making up soaps as a favorite pastime in the mountains; recalls some early travel and first stores in the area; comments on mountain food; comments on early mountain tools; August 18, 1963.

Sam Coffey tells about irregular warfare in the mountains during the Civil War; tells a story of Tom Dula (subject of the popular song "Tom Dooley"); tells of raid on still of Joshua Woodruff and of his trail; comments on moonshine making; tells of some murders in the area; describes burying customs; comments on log rolling and "shindigs" recalls courting customs in the mountains; tells of first railroad in the area; September 20, 1963.

TAPE 3

FOLKTUNES BY EARL SCRUGGS AND DR. NAT WINSTON, JR. AND NAT WINSTON, SR., RELATING EARLY FAMILY HISTORY.

Short excerpt recorded by Dr. Winston at home of Earl Scruggs. Earl plays "John Hardy" and "Little Joe"; February 29, 1956.

Dr. Nat Winston speaking to some group about the five-string banjo; relates a brief history of the instrument; tells about Joe Sweeny inventing the five-string banjo in 1831; comments on the instrument's popularity in the southern mountains; tells of Joe Sweeny's brother, Sam, who was Jeb Stuart's personal musician during the Civil War; traces the evolution of the instrument by using a three finger picking style; Dr. Winston plays banjo and sings mountain songs (see index) with a brief history given of each tune; no date given.

Nat Winston, Sr. relates family history and history of east Tennessee; tells how Bristol, Tennessee, was founded; comments on Main Street which divided Virginia and North Carolina (Tennessee); comments on boundary dispute after the Civil War between Virginia and Tennessee; weaves tale of his father and mother becoming engaged the night before Virginia and Tennessee troops were to fight over the boundary line; tells how both his grandfathers, Nat. M. Taylor and John Hastings Winston, Jr., stood in the middle of Main Street and said the troops would have to kill them first; tells of peaceful settlement of the dispute and renaming the street State Street.

Nat Winston, Sr. tells some history of the Love family-Nat, Alf, and Molly (cousins); comments on Molly Love going to Europe and living in high society; tells of Nat Love becoming rich on property in Bristol and comments on his temper; tells of Alf Love being sent to California after a drunk and rowdy episode.

Nat Winston, Sr. tells story of Taylor family during and after the Civil War; Winston claims Colonel Nat Taylor, Major George Taylor, and Captain William Harrison "Tip" Taylor were the only three Confederate officers from upper East Tennessee; tells of Nat Taylor refusing to speak to General-Admiral Samuel P. Carter after the Civil War was over because they fought on different sides; tells of George Taylor fighting in Mexican War and with Morgan's Raiders during the Civil War; relates "Tip" Taylor's capture and imprisonment at Fort Erie, Michigan; describes "Tip's" bitterness over treatment in the prison and of his refusing to take oath of allegiance after the war was over.

Comments on Payne family; tells about his paternal grandmother, Charlotte Elizabeth Payne; comments on Alexander Spottswood Payne (great-grandfather) visiting Mount Vernon and calling on George Washington.

Comments on life of Bob and Alf Taylor (cousins). Tells story of great-grandfather, General Nat Taylor serving with Andrew Jackson in Indian Wars and War 1812; comments on Indian orphans being brought back to the Watauga Settlement after battle of Big Bend; tells how Indians intermarried with slaves in upper East Tennessee comments on General Taylor's role in War of 1812; comments on law suit by the family to reclaim an entire county in Virginia which belonged to General Taylor; comments on Nat Taylor's body servant, the African Prince", who lived to be 110 years old and managed the Taylor farm; no date given.

Nat Wilson, Jr., speaking and playing the banjo at Shelbyville, Tennessee; introduction by master of ceremonies includes a good biographical sketch of Dr. Winston; Dr. Winston gives a brief history of the banjo and traces the evolution of the five-stringed instrument from Joe Sweeney to Earl Scruggs; sings, plays, and relates history of some Southern folksongs (see index); March 18, 1963.

CONTAINER LIST

Box 1

1. Agreements, estate papers, notes for collection, receipts, 1834-1904
2. Correspondence – Allen - West, 1825-1919.

Tapes

1. Folksongs recorded at Harvey Gragg's home.
2. Mountain life as told by Sam Coffey and sung by John Coffey, January 1960, to September 20, 1963.
3. Dr. Nat Winston and Earl Scruggs singing folksongs. Nat Winston, Sr. relates family history and history of upper East Tennessee, February 29, 1956.

INDEX TO SONGS

This index contains the folk tunes included in the Dr. Nat Winston, Jr. Audio Collection. The numbers following each song indicate the tape or tapes on which the song may be found. Instrumental numbers are denoted by an asterisk.

As Long As I Live - 1
Back Up and Push * - 1
Bound for the Promised Land - 2
Bully of the Town - 1
Bury Me Beneath the Weeping Willow Tree - 1
Careless Love - 1
Charmin' Betsey - 3
Coming Around the Mountain - 2
Cotton Eye Joe *- 1
Cripple Creek *- 1
Darlin Cory - 1
Down in the Willow Garden - 1
Down on the Banks of the Ohio - 1
Going Down the Road Feeling Bad - 1, 2
Instrumental (No-Title) *- 1, 3
John Hardy - 3
Johnson Boys, The * - 1
Liberty *- 1
Listen to the Mocking Bird *- 1
Little Joe - 2
Little Maggie - 1
Lord, I Feel Like Traveling On - 2
Lord, I Wanna go to Heaven when I Die - 2
Mountain Top *- 1
Oh, John I Sent your Saddle Home - 2
Old Joe Clark *- 1
Old Mountain Dew - 1, 2, 3
Pretty Polly - 3
Saddle Up the Mule *- 1
Sally Goodin' * - 1
Shady Grove - 1
Shortening Bread - 2
Shouting Little Lula *- 1
Sourwood Mountain - 1
Wait a Little Longer, Please Jesus - 1
Walking In the Parlor *- 1
White House Blues - 1
Whoa! Mule Whoa! *- 1